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Procopius and Thucydides on the Labors of War: Belisarius and Brasidas in the Field*

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Despite the notoriety attracted by his portrait of the antics of the imperial court in his so-called *Secret History*,[1] the historiographical methods and motives of Procopius of Caesarea, our main narrative source for the reign of Justinian I (527–565 C.E.), remain relatively understudied. This is particularly true of the state of research into Procopius' major work, the *Wars*, a monumental military and political history conceived on the global scale demanded by Justinian's campaigns against Sassanid Persia, Vandal North Africa, and Ostrogothic Italy. Although Procopius' debt to his classical predecessors, and to Thucydides in particular, has long been recognized,[2] ideas about the nature of Thucydides'

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[1] I use the following conventions to refer to the works of Procopius: *Wars* 1–8 (= *Bella* I–IV, V–VIII, vols. 1–2 in the Teubner edition by Haury and Wirth) is used in preference to *Persian Wars* (i.e., *Wars* 1–2), *Vandal Wars* (*Wars* 3–4), and *Gothic Wars* (*Wars* 5–8); *Anecdota* (*Historia arcana*, vol. 3 in Haury and Wirth; *HA* in references) is preferred to *Secret History*; *Buildings* refers to *De Aedificiis* (vol. 4 in Haury and Wirth; *Aed.* in references). Some controversy remains regarding the chronology of Procopius' works; see, most recently, Greatrex 1994; Evans 1996: 2–5.

[2] Procopius' relationship to Thucydides, centering wholly upon verbal correspondences between their works, was the subject of a dissertation by Braun (1885), who later treated Herodotus as well (*idem* 1894; see also Franke [1914] concerning Agathias). Bloomfield's translation of Thucydides into English (1829) included among its "very copious annotations" citations of parallel passages in ancient authors including Procopius, many

influence upon Procopius have been subject to reconsideration and revision over time.[3] We no longer single Procopius out as a bastion of classical enlightenment in an age of monkish superstition, but neither can we dismiss Procopius' investment in the classical historiographical tradition as a transparent literary pose. The challenge is to discover a Procopius who is recognizably the product of his own age, shaped by the pressures and preoccupations of the sixth century C.E., and to understand how a history written under the radically different conditions of the fifth century B.C.E. came to have relevance for him and helped him to formulate responses to contemporary problems.

The issue is an important one because, like Thucydides himself, Procopius is our key witness to a period of great transition and upheaval, for which he supplies a continuous historical narrative conditioned by his own distinctive point of view.[4] Consideration of his allusions to Thucydides leads one to examine Procopius' broader political and cultural allegiances and the lively engagement he demonstrates in all of his works with questions about the legitimate uses of power and their role in influencing historical change. By calling attention to the position of lesser parties implicated in conflict and drawing striking parallels between their plight and comparable situations in Thucydides, Procopius presents himself as a powerful and nuanced critic of Justinian's expansionist policies.[5] The work of Procopius' great predecessor supplied a rich conceptual backdrop against which the motivations and objectives of Procopius' own historical characters might be compared and evaluated.

Indeed, there is independent evidence that Procopius' audience responded to his work in this fashion. An anonymous commentator on the text of

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of which anticipate Braun. Thucydidean influence upon Procopius and its implications for the latter's historical veracity were debated by Brückner (1896) and Haury (1896), while classical allusions in the prefaces to Procopius' works as well as in those of other Byzantine historians were the subject of a study by Lieberich (1900); see also Cesa 1981: 397–98. More recently the work of Katherine Adshead (1983; 1990; 1993) has reopened the study of Thucydides' influence upon late antique historiography; particular correspondences between Procopius and Thucydides have been the subject of work by Soyter, Bornmann, Cesa 1982, Cameron 1985: 37–43, and Cresci.

[3]See Cameron 1985: 33–46, 225–41; *eadem* 1986; on earlier scholarship, particularly that of Rubin (1954; 1960: 173–226), see Cameron 1966. On classicizing historiography in late antiquity more generally, see *eadem* 1964; Cameron and Cameron; Croke and Emmett 1983a.

[4]Cf. Cameron 1985: 3–4: "as Thucydides does for the Peloponnesian War, or Tacitus for the early empire, so Procopius provides the filter through which we must view the reign of Justinian."

[5]For a wider-ranging survey of dissident reactions to the regime, see Pazdernik 1994.

Thucydides, apparently writing in the sixth century, was moved to make the following observation apropos of Thuc. 4.81.2 (*Scholia in Thuc.* 4.83.3 [Hude 268, with Powell 83]):[6]

> ...ἡ τῶν προυχόντων ἀρετὴ ἔν τε πόλεσι καὶ ἐν στρατηγίαις καὶ πανταχοῦ...καθίσταται τὸ ὑπήκοον καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων ποιεῖ μὴ καταφρονεῖν. ἐν μὲν τοῖς Ἕλλησι τὸν Βρασίδαν καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ στρατιάν, ἐν τοῖς ἡμετέροις δὲ Βελισάριον εἰς παράστασιν τοῦ παρόντος λόγου παραβαλλόμενος....
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> The ἀρετή of leaders wins subjects within [hostile] cities and armies...everywhere, and makes them respect their opponents. We may compare with this saying the example of Brasidas and his army, for the Greeks, and for ourselves the example of Belisarius....[7]

This parallel has much to recommend it. Like Brasidas the Spartan on his Thracian campaign (424–422 B.C.E., Thuc. 4.78–88, 102–35; 5.1–11), Justinian's general Belisarius, most notably on his mission against Vandal Africa (533 C.E., *Wars* 3.12–25; 4.1–9), stood at the head of a small, heterogeneous expe-

[6]Thuc. 4.81.2· τό τε γὰρ παραυτίκα ἑαυτὸν παρασχὼν δίκαιον καὶ μέτριον ἐς τὰς πόλεις ἀπέστησε τὰ πολλά, τὰ δὲ προδοσίᾳ εἷλε τῶν χωρίων...ἔς τε τὸν χρόνῳ ὕστερον μετὰ τὰ ἐκ Σικελίας πόλεμον ἡ τότε Βρασίδου ἀρετὴ καὶ ξύνεσις, τῶν μὲν πείρᾳ αἰσθομένων, τῶν δὲ ἀκοῇ νομισάντων, μάλιστα ἐπιθυμίαν ἐνεποίει τοῖς Ἀθηναίων ξυμμάχοις ἐς τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους ("Presenting himself for the moment as just and moderate toward the cities, he caused many to revolt, and others he seized by treachery... Later on in the war, after the events in Sicily, the ἀρετή and ξύνεσις of Brasidas at that time, known by experience to some and by hearsay to others, was what mainly instilled in the allies of Athens an enthusiasm for the Spartans"). On Brasidas' ἀρετή, see Hornblower 1996: 56–57.

[7]We shall return to this passage below, p. 165. Compare *Wars* 7.1.16–18, on Belisarius: ὅσον μὲν οὖν χρόνον τοῦ Ῥωμαίων στρατοῦ ἔν τε Λιβύῃ καὶ Ἰταλίᾳ προὔστη, νικῶν τε διετέλει καὶ τὰ ἐν ποσὶν ἀεὶ κτώμενος. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐς Βυζάντιον μετάπεμπτος ἦλθεν, ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ πρότερον αὐτοῦ ἡ ἀρετὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἐγνώσθη. αὐτός τε γὰρ πάσῃ ἀρετῇ προὔχων...φοβερὸς, ὡς τὸ εἰκὸς, ἄρχουσί τε πᾶσι καὶ στρατιώταις ἐγένετο ("So long as he led the Roman army in Libya and Italy, he was victorious and always acquiring whatever lay before him. When he was recalled to the capital his ἀρετή was fully recognized even more than in the past. For as he was eminent in every category of excellence...he was understandably formidable to all of the commanders and soldiers alike"). In my translations of Procopius I have consulted Dewing. This passage forms part of Procopius' eulogy of Belisarius (Cameron 1985: 138–39, 204), which is suffused with a valedictory air, heightened by cues alluding to Thucydides' obituary of Pericles: compare Thuc. 2.65.5; also *Wars* 7.1.22 and Thuc. 2.65.8; *Wars* 7.1.23 and Thuc. 2.65.10. See further Cresci; Braun 1885: 17–21.

ditionary force operating in enemy territory. In order to maintain their own positions and to advance their larger objectives, both generals turned to diplomacy, bolstered by the threat of force, in an attempt to win the support of localities, thus detaching them from their allegiance to the enemy. The task required a particular sort of charismatic leadership, one capable of maintaining discipline over troops serving in unfamiliar conditions, on the one hand, and inspiring confidence and trust on the part of the inhabitants, on the other. Appearing on the scene as invaders, they nonetheless sought to construct a community of interest between themselves and the subjected populations whose loyalties they hoped to sway.

Our scholiast offers powerful independent testimony to a particular habit of mind apparent in the sixth century, one which sought to relate contemporary events and figures to monuments of the past. Although the passage has been exploited as evidence of Procopius' association with a school of Thucydidean studies in sixth-century Gaza,[8] its implications for the interpretation of Procopius' portrait of Belisarius, to whom the historian had been attached as his *assessor* and aide-de-camp, have scarcely been explored. Procopius' *Wars*, which some contemporary readers described simply as a book about Belisarius,[9] is one such attempt at imaginatively reinscribing the past upon the present. Procopius invites his reader, as it were, to re-imagine Belisarius as a contemporary Brasidas—the latter a beguiling figure, mild and upright in his dealings, implacable toward the foe; for whom, however, Thucydides' admiration was tempered by his recognition of a canny opportunism, stemming from Brasidas' failure to match his rhetoric to prevailing contingencies of power.

Both Brasidas and Belisarius proclaim a campaign of liberation, undertaken on behalf of the populations whose cooperation they hope to secure, against their opponents, whose rule they characterize as illegitimate and despotic. Each meets with success, the one in enrolling the Greek cities of Thrace in a panhellenic crusade against Athens, the other in winning the cooperation of the

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[8]On the proposed sixth-century date for the scholion as well as its provenance in Gaza, see Luschnat 19; on the scholia produced there, Wilson 30–36. The question of whether Procopius studied at Gaza has no bearing on the arguments presented here; I share Cameron's scepticism (1985: 6–7) as to the persuasiveness of the hypothesis. The affirmative case has recently been supported by Greatrex (1996, esp. 129–30), revisiting Haury (1896: 4–19). Balázs 39–41, drawing upon Braun (1885: 20–21), grasped the persuasiveness of the Belisarius-Brasidas parallel. On the Gaza school see also Downey 1958, esp. 314; *idem* 1963: 102–13, esp. 112–13; Evans 1972: 31–32; Litsas, esp. 63–66.

[9]Evagrius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4.12 (Bidez-Parmentier 162). For references to comparable descriptions in later authors, see Cameron 1985: 134 n. 3.

inhabitants of North Africa against their Vandal overlords on the strength of an appeal to a shared Roman identity. In depicting these battles for hearts and minds, however, both Thucydides and Procopius expose the cold calculations of *Machtpolitik* that lie at the heart of such appeals. The inhabitants of the invaded territories are persuaded to be liberated, yet their welfare is not the foremost concern of the invader. The respective fates of the Thracian cities of Mende and Skione at the close of the first phase of the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 4.120–24, 129–33, 5.18, 32) and Naples at the outset of the Ostrogothic War (*Wars* 5.8–10) demonstrate the ambivalence of both figures. Nor are the would-be liberators themselves free from entanglements with their respective governments. In the end the priorities of the rulers at home, and not those of the crusading generals themselves, determine the objectives of the conflict.

The comparisons Procopius establishes between Belisarius and Brasidas provide a thematic center for a range of issues implicated in Justinian's own claims to have restored liberty to the Roman inhabitants of the West. These Libyans and Italians, as Procopius designates them, were claimed by the invading eastern army as "Romans of old" who had been subjected to an alien sway following the barbarian conquests and, having been rescued by the imperial forces, returned to their legitimate sovereign. Procopius' investment in Thucydides, accordingly, was political as well as artistic and scholarly in character. His allusions to Thucydides and to the historiographical tradition represented by Thucydides authorized Procopius' efforts to problematize the retrospective justifications offered for the reconquest of the West and to draw attention to the plight of third parties enmeshed in great-power conflict. Both historians appraised geopolitical relationships in terms of strategies of accommodation that were influenced not merely by differences of strength but also by the nature of the affirmations and allegiances one party was seeking from the other. In the work of both historians, particular interest attaches to the terms ἐλευθερία and δουλεία—"freedom" and "slavery" in Greek—which function as the coin of particular transactions of power, expressing the relative advantage of one party over another, the congruity of their interests, and the basis upon which cooperation is obtained.

The Justinianic Context

The clash of allegiances set in motion by Justinian's assertion of imperial authority over the West exposed a larger cultural and political reorientation, one in which former categories of belonging and standards of inclusion were being opportunistically rediscovered and ideologically recast. Justinian trumpeted Belisarius' surprisingly easy victory over the Vandals late in the year 533 both as a holy war directed against Arian persecutors of the indigenous orthodox

population and as a campaign of liberation dedicated to restoring the rights of Roman citizens subjected to an alien despotism.[10] The opening of Justinian's first *Novel*, dated 1 January 535[11]—some fifteen years before Procopius completed books one through seven of the *Wars*—links together the themes of imperial triumph and providential favor that had crowned the emperor's foreign policy with success (*Nov.* 1 pr. [Schöll-Kroll 1]):

> Ἐνησχολημένοις ἡμῖν περὶ τὰς ἁπάσης τῆς πολιτείας φροντίδας, καὶ μικρὸν οὐδὲν αἱρουμένοις ἐννοεῖν, ἀλλ' ὅπως ἂν Πέρσαι μὲν ἠρεμοῖεν, Βανδίλοι δὲ σὺν Μαυρουσίοις ὑπακούοιεν, Καρχηδόνιοι δὲ τὴν παλαιὰν ἀπολαβόντες ἔχοιεν ἐλευθερίαν, Τζάνοι τε νῦν πρῶτον ὑπὸ τὴν Ῥωμαίων γενόμενοι πολιτείαν ἐν ὑπηκόοις τελοῖεν (τοῦτο ὅπερ οὔπω καὶ νῦν πλὴν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας βασιλείας δέδωκε Ῥωμαίοις ὁ θεός), ἐπιρρέουσι καὶ ἰδιωτικαὶ φροντίδες παρὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων ὑπηκόων ἀεὶ προσαγγελλόμεναι, ὧν ἑκάστῃ μὲν δίδομεν τὸν προσήκοντα τύπον.

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[10]*Nov.* 78.4.1 (18 Jan. 539; Schöll-Kroll 387): καὶ γὰρ δὴ ταύτης ἕνεκα τῆς ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ἐπὶ Λιβύης καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς Ἑσπέρας τηλικούτους ἠράμεθα πολέμους ὑπέρ τε τῆς ὀρθῆς πρὸς θεὸν δόξης ὑπέρ τε τῆς τῶν ὑπηκόων ἐλευθερίας ("For it was out of enthusiasm for this [i.e., the emancipation of slaves] that we undertook such great wars in Libya and in the West, for the sake of both true belief in God and the liberty of our subjects"). Defense of orthodoxy was an initial motive for the Vandal expedition, according to Procopius (*Wars* 3.10.19). Eastern commercial interests reportedly had an interest as well (3.20.4–6). The chronicler Zachariah of Mitylene credits certain influential African landowners in exile at the capital with stirring Justinian's determination to intervene (Hamilton-Brooks 262–63).

Compare *CJ* 1.27.1.8 (534 C.E.; Krüger 1954: 77): ...*cognoscant eius habitatores, quam a durissima captivitate et iugo barbarico liberati in quanta libertate sub felicissimo nostro imperio degere meruerunt* ("...let the inhabitants [of Africa] learn from what most severe captivity and barbaric yoke they have been freed and what great freedom they have gained under our happy rule"). If, as Honoré concludes on the basis of stylometric analysis (1975; *idem* 1978: 25), this constitution was composed by Justinian himself, the liberation rhetoric is to be attributed all the more to Justinian's own initiative, rather than that of his ministers—all of whom, Procopius claims, had opposed the expedition (*Wars* 3.10.2–21; see also Lydus, *De mag.* 3.43–55 [Wünsch 132–45]). The daring of John the Cappadocian, who alone ventured to oppose himself openly to the will of his monarch, calls to mind the intervention of the wise advisor Artabanos in book seven of Herodotus, who similarly warned against Xerxes' proposal for the invasion of Greece (Hdt. 7.8–18; Braun 1894: 46).

[11]On the value of such prefaces for reconstructing Justinianic ideology, see Maas 1986.

> Even though we have been occupied with the concerns of the entire government and can take thought of nothing of lesser importance, yet inasmuch as the Persians are quiescent and the Vandals, together with the Mauri, offer submission,[12] the inhabitants of North Africa are enjoying the ancient freedom they have received, and the Tzani, now for the first time under the power of the Roman people, are counted as subjects—a thing God had not granted the Romans until our reign—private concerns addressed unceasingly by our subjects are also reaching us, to each of which we are giving an appropriate response.

The progression of thought is clear: under Justinian, Persia, an old foe, had been neutralized, the alien occupier of Roman North Africa liquidated, and the nomadic peoples beyond the reach of civilization there subdued; the conquest of a formerly independent people[13] had, moreover, expanded the authority of the Roman people in a wholly new direction, supplying further proofs of

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[12]Compare *Nov.* 30.11.2 (18 March 536; Schöll-Kroll 234), invoking the wars, δι' ὧν δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Πέρσας τε ἄγειν εἰρήνην Βανδίλους τε καὶ 'Αλανοὺς καὶ Μαυρουσίους χειρώσασθαι, καὶ 'Αφρικὴν ὅλην καὶ πρός γε καὶ Σικελίαν κατακτήσασθαι.... ("through which God has allowed us to keep peace with the Persians, to subdue the Vandals and the Alans and the Mauri, and to take possession of all of Africa and Sicily besides...."). Promulgated following Belsarius' occupation of Sicily, it makes explicit Justinian's ambitions for reestablishing direct rule over the whole of the western empire. See also *C. Imperatoriam* 1 (21 Nov. 533, announcing the completion of Justinian's *Institutes*; Krüger 1963: xxiii); *C. Tanta* pr. (16 Dec. 533, announcing the completion of the *Digest*; Mommsen and Krüger 13–14).

[13]See also *Nov.* 28 pr. (16 July 535; Schöll-Kroll 213). Ambiguities regarding the juridical status of such subjected peoples are discussed by Goria 309–13; Gaudemet 1984, esp. 18–26; *idem* 1958. On the Tzani, a non-Romanized people dwelling inland from the Black Sea in the mountains beyond Trebizond, see Braund 288–92; Adontz 49–53; Bury 1: 322 n. 5; *idem* 2: 79; Rubin 1960: 180, 433 n. 432. Procopius describes their submission (in the 520s) as a passage from barbarism to civilization (*Wars* 1.15.19–25; cf. 2.3.39): formerly αὐτόνομοι and "subjects of no one," οὐδενὸς κατήκοοι, they were induced to supply troops and to convert to Christianity, thus "changing their manner of life to one of a gentler sort" (τήν τε γὰρ δίαιταν ἐπὶ τὸ ἡμερώτερον μεταβαλόντες, 1.15.25; cf. *Aed.* 3.6.7). In the *Buildings* Procopius lays greater stress on their primitivism, classing them not only as αὐτόνομοι but also as ἄναρχοι, people lacking government (3.6.1–2). Justinian established an infrastructure intended to keep them in check (3.6.8), but to no avail; in the late 550s they rebelled and had to be subdued once again (Agathias 5.1.2–2.5 [Keydell 164–66]). On Procopius' use of such ethnographic material, see Cesa 1982; Maas forthcoming; Amory 165–95.

the auspiciousness of the reign.[14] These feats not only vindicated the liberty ostensibly lost by the Roman citizens in Africa following the Vandal invasion—an effect capable of being assimilated with a Roman captive's right of *postliminium*, thus associating with the emperor the prestige of an emancipator and *redemptor captivorum*[15]—but also supplied the international stability and security that permitted the emperor to turn his attention away from his victorious arms and toward the business of responding to the petitions of his subjects. This gesture describes a continuous arc seamlessly uniting Justinian's foreign and domestic policy, making *arma* and *leges* equivalent instruments of external and internal tranquillity.

In other legislative contexts Justinian drew upon the emancipation analogy and declared the expansion of freedom to be an overriding purpose of his rule and an object of special concern.[16] Two great acts of reclamation, the recovery of

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[14]Compare *CJ* 1.27.1.6 (Krüger 1954: 77): *quod beneficium dei antecessores nostri non meruerunt...* ("our predecessors did not deserve this favor of God [i.e., the liberation of Africa]"). On Justinian's criticisms of his imperial predecessors, see Honoré 1978: 22.

[15]*CJ* 1.27.1.1: *...ut Africa per nos tam brevi tempore reciperet libertatem, ante centum et quinque annos a Vandalis captivata....* ("...as Africa through our efforts has received freedom within a short time, after having for one hundred and five years previously been held in captivity by the Vandals...."); for the chronology, see Clover 1989: 57. *CJ* 1.27.1.5: *quo ergo sermone aut quibus operibus dignas deo gratias agere valeamus, quod per me, ultimum servum suum, ecclesiae suae iniurias vindicare dignatus est et tantarum provinciarum populos a iugo servitutis eripere?* ("With what words and with what efforts could we give proper thanks to God, who rendered me, the most humble of his servants, worthy to avenge the wrongs of his church, and to rescue the people of so many provinces from the yoke of servitude?"). Honoré points out (1978: 18 n. 169) that the legal basis of the claim was unrigorous.

On *postliminium*, see *Inst.* 1.12.5 (Krueger 1963: 5) = Gaius, *Inst.* 1.129: *si ab hostibus captus fuerit parens, quamvis servus hostium fiat, tamen pendet ius liberorum propter ius postliminii: quia hi, qui ab hostibus capti sunt, si reversi fuerint, omnia pristina iura recipiunt* ("If the head of the family is captured by enemies, although he becomes the slave of the enemy, the status of the children is in suspense because of his *ius postliminii*. This is true because those who have been captured by the enemy and come back recover all their former rights"). As Wirszubski 3–7 emphasizes, *libertas* represented above all the civil protections conferred by Roman law. On the status of the *redemptus*, significantly modified by Justinian, see Ernst Levy, esp. 171–74.

[16]E.g., *CJ* 7.24.1 pr. (531–534 C.E.; Krüger 1954: 305): *cum in nostris temporibus, in quibus multos labores pro libertate subiectorum sustinuimus, satis esse impium credidimus quasdam mulieres libertate sua fraudari et, quod ab hostium ferocitate contra naturalem libertatem inductum est, hoc a libidine nequissimorum hominum inferri, Claudianum SC...conquiescere in posterum volumus....* ("Because in our times, in which

Roman territory in the West by means of his victorious arms and the recovery of Roman law through the compilation of the *Corpus iuris civilis* and an ongoing program of legal reform, heralded the restoration of *libertas* to the Roman people. In Justinian's hands, consequently, freedom served as a particularly versatile badge of political and cultural inclusion, capable of uniting the putative beneficiaries of initiatives as diverse as the reconquest of North Africa and the formal abrogation of the *senatus consultum Claudianum*[17] in a recognition of mutual identity and shared participation in legitimate government. At the same time, however, the emperor's readiness, as evidenced most starkly in the opening sentence of *Novel* 1 cited above, to refer throughout his legislation to both conquered barbarians and Roman citizens indifferently as his "subjects" (Lat. *subiecti*/Gr. ὑπήκοοι)[18] suggests how tenuous such theoretical juridical and constitutional distinctions of status had become.

Retrospectively, the motives and objectives of Justinian's African war achieved a crystalline purity, unalloyed by any equivocation over the legitimacy of Vandal rule,[19] or the willingness of the notionally captive population to rally

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we have sustained many labors for the sake of the freedom of our subjects, we have believed it to be quite impious that certain women should be deprived of their freedom and that that fate which has been imposed by the ferocity of an enemy against natural liberty be likewise inflicted by the lust of the vilest of men, we wish that the senatus consultum Claudianum...should henceforth be in abeyance..."); *Nov.* 78.4.1 (supra, n. 10); 89 pr. (1 Sept. 539; Schöll-Kroll 429).

[17]*CJ* 7.24.1 (preceding note); *Inst.* 3.12.1 (Krüger 1963: 35). Comparable rhetoric advanced the claim that the offspring of a *colonus adscripticius* and a free woman should follow the condition of the mother (*CJ* 11.48.24 [Krüger 1954: 443 and n. 1]; cf. *Nov.* 54 pr., 1 [1 Sept. 537; Schöll-Kroll 306–07], 162.2 [9 June 539; Schöll-Kroll 748], *Nov.* Appendix 1 [7 April 540; Schöll-Kroll 796]). See further Collinet; Jones 1958; *idem* 1964: 800–801; Eibach 162–91; Bianchini; Schmitz.

[18]Justinian appears to have been the first emperor to refer consistently in his legislation to Roman citizens as his subjects; see Thurman, but cf. Dupont, esp. 326–28, who discovers some instances in the prefaces and epilogues of some post-Theodosian *Novels*. See also Orestano 275–76; Goria 296–302 and n. 74. In the case of capitulated aliens such as the Tzani, their degeneration of status from αὐτόνομοι to ὑπήκοοι (supra, n. 13) would appear to have many of the same connotations noted by Ostwald for the classical period: "the opposition between ὑπήκοοι and αὐτόνομοι is practically identical with that between αὐτονομία [which denotes not political independence but rather self-determination which is predicated upon, and to some extent tolerated by, a superior power] and living under the ἀρχή of another power" (13). See also Bickerman 328–35; Edmond Levy, esp. 256–70; Bosworth 1992, esp. 129.

[19]Relations between the Vandal kingdom and Constantinople were regularized by a treaty between the Vandal king Geiseric and the emperor Valentinian III (imp. 425–455

behind the imperial standards.[20] The imperative of liberating the enslaved Romans of the former western empire supplied an unimpeachable motive for a policy of military aggression, one which resonated particularly with those who felt a deep investment in the specifically Roman character of the state, for whom the conquest of the West recovered for Rome what was Rome's.[21] The ἐλευθερία Justinian reserved for such persons distinguished them from other peoples brought within the reach of imperial authority[22] and advanced a special,

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C.E.) in 442, subsequently reaffirmed by Zeno (imp. 474–491): Clover 1982: 667–69, with refs. See also n. 36 infra.

[20]The reality of the captivity experienced by the Libyans under Vandal rule had been a varied matter, involving differing degrees of dispossession and inconvenience, as Procopius understood (*Wars* 3.4.1–3, 5.11–17; cf. Victor Vitensis 1.12–14 [Halm 4]); on the Vandal settlement see Courtois 276–83; Clover 1989.

[21]"Rome became subject to the Romans again (ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις γέγονεν), after a span of sixty years," Procopius writes of the recovery of the city by Belisarius in December 536 (*Wars* 5.14.14; cf. Evagrius *HE* 4.19 [Bidez-Parmentier 169]). John Lydus too can write that Justinian "restored to Rome what was Rome's" (τῇ δὲ Ῥώμῃ τὰ Ῥώμης ἀπέσωσεν, *De mag.* 3.55 [Wünsch 145]). Likewise Agathias states that Procopius recounted in the *Wars* "how Sicily, Rome and Italy cast off their barbarian occupiers and were restored to their ancient way of life" (ἤθεσι πατρίοις, pr., 30 [Keydell 9]). See also Cesa 1981, esp. 395–99. The inscription recording how Narses, *libertate urbis Romae ac totius Italiae restituta*, restored the bridge over the Anio on the Via Salaria outside of Rome (*CIL* 6.1199a, 565 C.E.), testifies to the potency of such rhetoric even at the very end of the reign.

[22]Elsewhere Justinian is explicit in describing the conquest of North Africa as resulting in the enslavement of the Vandals. *Nov.* 8.10.2 (15 April 535; Schöll-Kroll 74): ...οὐδὲ ἡμῶν αἱρουμένων περιορᾶν τὴν Ῥωμαίων γῆν ἐλαττωθεῖσαν, ἀλλὰ Λιβύην τε πᾶσαν ἀνακτησαμένων καὶ Βανδίλους καταδουλωσάντων.... ("...nor are we content to overlook the diminution of Roman territory, but have recovered the whole of Libya and reduced the Vandals to servitude [*in servitutem redegimus*, in the Latin version of the text]...."). The mosaic ceiling of the Khalkê Gate of the Great Palace likewise depicted the defeated kings of the Vandals and the Goths approaching the imperial couple "as prisoners of war to be delivered into bondage": κατὰ δὲ τὸ μέσον ἑστᾶσιν ὅ τε βασιλεὺς καὶ ἡ βασιλὶς Θεοδώρα, ἐοικότες ἄμφω γεγηθόσι τε καὶ νικητήρια ἑορτάζουσιν ἐπί τε τῷ Βανδίλων καὶ Γότθων βασιλεῖ, δορυαλώτοις τε καὶ ἀγωγίμοις παρ' αὐτοὺς ἥκουσι (*Aed.* 1.10.17); see Mango 30–35.; MacCormack 73. Compare Agathias' précis of Procopius' *Wars* (pr., 24 [Keydell 8]): ...Γελίμερά τε τὸν Βανδίλον καὶ Καρχηδόνα τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὴν ξύμπασαν χώραν τῶν Ἄφρων...Ἰουστινιανῷ δουλωθεῖσαν καὶ πάλιν τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐπικρατείας μέρος γεγενημένην ("[One can learn from Procopius' account that] Gelimer the Vandal and the city of Carthage and the whole territory of Africa were subjugated by Justinian and once again became part of the Roman empire"). So too the

and potentially double-edged, claim upon their loyalty and obedience. The offensive against the Ostrogoths in Italy, waged with objectives comparable to those of the Vandal War, would frame the issue starkly: to what extent did the Roman captive's entitlement to ἐλευθερία entail a positive duty to join in the work of his own liberation?

Belisarius in the Field, Part I: Procopius' *Vandal War*

Although Justinianic propaganda suggested after the fact that the African war effected an *Anschluss* that had healed the severed parts of an indivisible realm, Procopius in his narrative of the Vandal conflict is at pains to emphasize the extent to which disarray and political-cultural differences within the imperial expeditionary forces themselves compromised Belisarius' mission and threatened to foreclose any possibility of cooperation with the Libyans against their Vandal occupiers. Belisarius' effectiveness in rising above these limitations rested upon the force of his personal example and his appeals to the practical benefits of solidarity, Procopius suggests, and not upon the extraordinary powers delegated to him by Justinian or any particular regard for the legitimacy and authority of imperial claims over North Africa. Though the account valorizes Belisarius' essential role in achieving victory over the Vandals, the general is instrumental chiefly for holding in check the centrifugal forces threatening the cohesiveness of his troops, whereas the military situation he confronted is conditioned primarily by the Vandals' own mistakes and shortcomings.[23] The general's own convictions remain inaccessible; instead the reader is left to draw conclusions from the public pronouncements Procopius attributes to Belisarius, in which the latter is depicted carefully taking the measure of his audience and representing the nature of the emperor's power and the motives of the expedition accordingly. The resulting account captures not only the improvisational and contingent character of any military expedition, but also the elements of expediency, opportunism, and brinkmanship that contributed to the formation of a far-from-self-evident imperative of imperial reunification.

The army assembled to take on the Vandals was a small and heterogeneous force.[24] The variety of its composition would prove to be as significant a

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Tzani, according to Procopius in the *Buildings* (*Aed.* 3.6.6), were upon their capitulation "accepting for themselves a servitude free from care, in exchange for a dangerous liberty": ...πρὸ τῆς ἐπικινδύνου ἐλευθερίας τὴν ἄπονον δουλείαν ἑλόμενοι σφίσι.

23 E.g., *Wars* 3.19.25; see Pringle 1: 16–22.

24 *Wars* 3.11.2–21. It numbered some fifteen thousand; of these ten thousand were infantry, with the balance comprised mainly of heavy cavalry. A good proportion of the latter were Belisarius' own retainers. The expedition was supported by a fleet consisting

constraint upon Belisarius as its size. Not untypically for a late Roman army,[25] it comprised both "regular" formations, containing varying proportions of troops identified as both Roman and barbarian under officers holding Roman military commissions,[26] and regiments of allied troops of barbarians (ξύμμαχοι) under their own commanders.[27] As Procopius illustrates, Belisarius' success depended upon the capacity of his warriors, both the ordinary soldiers of uncertain ethnicity and their Hun or Herul ξύμμαχοι, to recognize that the advantages of persuading the natives to accept the invaders as a Roman army, dispatched by an emperor to whom these natives themselves owed allegiance, outweighed those of indiscriminate plunder. To this extent Belisarius' task of persuasion was twofold. On one hand, in order to ensure that the natives would supply a market with which to provision his troops and not contrive to impede his march, he needed to convince them that the expedition had been undertaken with their interests in mind; in practice this meant winning the cooperation of local notables, who might be ideologically predisposed to respond to the evocation of an imperial past. To his troops, on the other hand, who lacked such refinement, the appeal was instead to enlightened self-interest and the need to uphold the justice of the emperor's cause, lest retribution follow from on high.

A pair of incidents before the expedition made contact with the Vandals exposed the unsteady allegiances of Belisarius' troops. Two Hunnic soldiers from a contingent of ξύμμαχοι who had murdered a comrade in a fit of drunken anger while the fleet was anchored off Abydus in the Hellespont were summarily executed by Belisarius as a warning against further excesses. This strict martial discipline was offensive to the rest of the Huns and even to the regulars in the army; but where the latter merely deplored their commander's

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of five hundred transports and ninety-two light warships. See Bury 2: 127; cf. Jones 1964: 273. The African expedition of 468 under Leo I was reportedly much larger (*Wars* 3.6.1). On the resources of Belisarius' household, cf. *Wars* 7.1.20f. On private retainers or *bucellarii* (Gk. δορυφόροι, ὑπασπισταί), see Jones 1964: 666–67.

[25] See Liebeschuetz 1990: 7–85; also Teall; Fotiou.

[26] Amory, esp. 26–33, contests the meaningfulness of such distinctions.

[27] The core of the expeditionary force, Procopius states, was drawn from both from the ordinary troops and from the *foederati* (ἔκ τε στρατιωτῶν καὶ φοιδεράτων). By the sixth century this distinction had become virtually meaningless (*Wars* 3.11.3–4, 8.5.13; for the meaning of the term in the fourth and fifth centuries see Heather 108–13, 253–54). For Procopius the operative distinction between these forces and the ξύμμαχοι is that the latter, like the *foederati* of old, have entered imperial service "not as slaves inasmuch as they had not been subdued by the Romans," οὐκ ἐπὶ τῷ δοῦλοι εἶναι, ἅτε μὴ πρὸς Ῥωμαίων ἡσσημένοι, but have rather "entered the Roman state on the basis of complete equality," ἐπὶ τῇ ἴσῃ καὶ ὁμοίᾳ ἐς τὴν πολιτείαν ἀφίκοιντο (3.11.3).

rigor, the Huns objected that Belisarius' assertion of authority was illegitimate: as allies the discipline of their troops was their own concern.[28] Such insubordination, which dramatized the composite character of the entire force, demonstrated how little the extensive powers conferred upon Belisarius by Justinian[29] would avail him in responding to the ambiguous conditions on the ground in North Africa.[30] Assembling the army in response to this complaint, Belisarius accordingly set aside finer distinctions of prerogative in order to emphasize the place of justice, τὸ δίκαιον, as a superseding standard of conduct (*Wars* 3.12.11–21). The case at hand must stand as a lesson to the entire army, he avowed: "I will not regard any one of you as a fellow-soldier of mine (συστρατιώτην ἐμόν), no matter how terrible he is reputed to be against the foe, who is not able to use clean hands against the enemy" (*Wars* 3.12.20). Belisarius thus appealed to the assembled warriors as a single force, united by a common interest against the enemy and a shared fate. His authority proceeded above all from his own example of moral rectitude and self-restraint.

On the day following the landing of the expeditionary forces on the African coast, at Caput Vada some two hundred kilometers from the Vandal capital at

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[28] *Wars* 3.12.10: ...ἔφασκον οὐκ ἐπὶ τιμωρίᾳ οὐδ' ἐπὶ τῷ ὑπεύθυνοι εἶναι Ῥωμαίων νόμοις ἐς ξυμμαχίαν ἥκειν (τὰ γὰρ δὴ σφῶν νόμιμα οὐ τοιάσδε τῶν φόνων ποιεῖσθαι τὰς τίσεις) ("They declared that they had not entered into alliance in order to be punished, nor to be accountable to the laws of the Romans—for their own laws did not prescribe such punishments for murder").

[29] His title was στρατηγὸς αὐτοκράτωρ. Procopius remarks that Justinian's written orders conceded wide-ranging powers of discretion and provided that Belisarius' acts would be authoritative, "as if the emperor himself had carried them out. For the instructions conferred upon him the power of an emperor": γράμματά τε αὐτῷ βασιλεὺς ἔγραφε, δρᾶν ἕκαστα ὅπη ἂν αὐτῷ δοκῇ ἄριστα ἔχειν, ταῦτά τε κύρια εἶναι ἅτε αὐτοῦ βασιλέως αὐτὰ διαπεπραγμένου. βασιλέως γὰρ αὐτῷ ῥοπὴν τὰ γράμματα ἐποίει (*Wars* 3.11.20). On problems associated with military discipline in the period, see Kaegi 1981: 41–63.

[30] In the period of maneuvering between the initial defeat of the Vandals at Ad Decimum (13 September 533) and Belisarius' decisive victory at Tricamarum some three months later, the Vandal king Gelimer (n. 36 infra) attempted to exploit the divisions within Belisarius' forces and to undermine the basis of cooperation he was establishing between himself and the natives. The list of his overtures to various factions (*Wars* 4.1.4–6), which met with some success, reads like a catalogue of the disparate groups brought together under Belisarius: the citizens of Carthage, soldiers of the Arian faith serving in the Roman army, and finally the Huns, still chafing under the terms of their alliance.

Carthage,[31] another lapse in discipline obliged Belisarius to assemble the army a second time. A group of soldiers had gone out of the camp and begun plundering the fields thereabout. In the speech he addressed to his soldiers on this occasion, Belisarius recalled his earlier emphasis on the place of justice in the conduct of operations: under any circumstances, he states, the misappropriation of goods would in itself be τὸ ἄδικον. In the present circumstances, moreover, the injustice of the act was of less moment than the sheer peril to which the folly of the act exposed the army (*Wars* 3.16.3–4):

> ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκείνῳ μόνῳ τὸ θαρρεῖν ἔχων εἰς τὴν γῆν ὑμᾶς ἀπεβίβασα ταύτην, ὅτι τοῖς Βανδίλοις οἱ Λίβυες, Ῥωμαῖοι τὸ ἀνέκαθεν ὄντες, ἄπιστοί τέ εἰσι καὶ χαλεπῶς ἔχουσι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ᾤμην ὡς οὔτ' ἄν τι τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἡμᾶς ἐπιλείποι οὔτε τι ἐξ ἐπιδρομῆς κακὸν ἐργάσονται ἡμᾶς οἱ πολέμιοι. ἀλλὰ νῦν αὕτη ὑμῶν ἡ ἀκράτεια ταῦτα εἰς τοὐναντίον ἡμῖν μεταβέβληκε. τοὺς γὰρ Λίβυας δήπου κατηλλάξατε τοῖς Βανδίλοις, εἰς ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἤδη τὴν τούτων περιαγαγόντες δυσμένειαν.
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> "For I have disembarked you on this land taking confidence in this fact alone, that the Libyans, as Romans of old, are disloyal and bitterly opposed to the Vandals, and counting on this I reasoned that we would not be left without necessities, nor would the enemy do us injury unexpectedly. But now your lack of discipline has upset our situation entirely. For you have undoubtedly reconciled the Libyans to the Vandals, directing their hostility upon yourselves."

With these remarks Belisarius enlarged the circle of shared interest and self-identification even further. Just as previously he had urged the members of his army to view their fortunes as providentially interlinked, here he attempted to convince them to view the Libyans as potential collaborators rather than as opponents. The Libyans were in a position to offer potentially decisive support, if indeed they could be persuaded to feel some stirring of allegiance toward Constantinople on the strength of an appeal to a shared Roman identity. Their sympathies could not be taken for granted.

Belisarius initially directed his forces against the city of Sullectum, which stood on the road to Carthage. Scrupling against a direct confrontation, the

[31]The Vandals had meanwhile been distracted by fortuitous revolts in Tripolitania and on the island of Sardinia; unaware of the Roman threat, Gelimer had responded strongly to the second crisis by sending troops and a fleet, significantly diminishing the forces at his disposal.

general dispatched a small force of infiltrators—his own *bucellarii*, known by him to be trustworthy—with orders to attempt to enter and take possession of the city by stealth.[32] As Procopius reports, their instructions, if they succeeded, were (*Wars* 3.16.9):

> ...κακὸν μὲν μηδὲν ἐν αὐτῇ δρᾶσαι, ἐπαγγείλασθαι δὲ ἀγαθὰ μυρία, καὶ ὡς ἐπὶ τῇ αὐτῶν ἐλευθερίᾳ ἥκοιεν, ὥστε εἰσιτητὰ τῷ στρατῷ ἐς αὐτὴν γενέσθαι.
>
> ...to do no harm in it, but to proclaim a thousand good things and that they had come in defense of the people's freedom, so that an entry into the city might be afforded to the army.

The officials at Sullectum, who in any event lacked the means of offering determined resistance,[33] deferred to the Roman general's appeal and admitted his forces.[34] Despite this happy outcome, however, one cannot fail to see the disingenuousness in Belisarius' orders[35]—the first instance in which the African expedition is described as having liberation as its goal—which, as Procopius paraphrases them, make his invocation of ἐλευθερία hyperbolic and coldly calculating.[36] Nor should we take this amiss: generals routinely employed deceit

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[32]The plan had something in common with the attempt by Thebes to wrest the city of Plataia in Boiotia from the Athenian alliance in the surprise thrust which surreptitiously opened the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 2.2–6; Hornblower 1991: 236–37). Thucydides' account of the resulting siege is a classic of the genre: see Cameron 1985: 39; Hunger 26–27. Parallel citations of siege narratives in Procopius were collected by Braun (1885: 207–18); on Procopius' treatment of sieges see Adshead 1990.

[33]Vandal policy was to deprive the cities of Libya, except for Carthage itself, of fortifications in order to deny an invader a stronghold—incidentally the policy advocated by Sparta at the end of the Persian Wars as a way of forestalling the fortification of Athens (Thuc. 1.89.3–93.2). As a measure of protection against Mauri raids, however, Sullectum had erected barriers to entry into the town and was thus capable of offering some slight resistance: *Wars* 3.5.8–9, 15.9; *Aed.* 6.5.2–5.

[34]*Wars* 3.16.10–11: mingling with some rustics entering the city at dawn, the infiltrators "quietly and without trouble," σιωπῇ καὶ οὐδενὶ πόνῳ, took possession of the city. Calling together the city elders, which notably included the local priest, they conferred the general's message and received the keys to the gates "from willing hands," παρ' ἑκόντων.

[35]Cf. Rubin 1954: 138 *ad loc.*

[36]Equally cynical is the last of three letters, protesting the deposition of the Vandal king Hilderic by his kinsman Gelimer, said to have been drafted by Justinian to supply a pretext for the Roman incursion (*Wars* 3.9.10–13, 15–19, 16.12–14). Procopius claims that this third letter was mishandled and never seen by anyone of consequence. Urging

among their techniques for avoiding the delay and expense of a siege. The bloodless occupation of the city helped to ensure that the Roman forces did not alienate the Libyans on their march to Carthage. The speedy capitulation of Sullectum spared Belisarius the necessity of putting expediency before principle. The inhabitants of Sullectum had shown good sense in declining to resist their own liberation, with all of the grisly consequences such a betrayal might have entailed.

Belisarius and Brasidas

Belisarius was not obliged, therefore, to destroy Sullectum in order to carry forward his work of liberation. To the contrary, Procopius reports that when Belisarius arrived in the city he succeeded in holding his forces in check; as for the general himself, the historian continues (*Wars* 3.17.6):

> ...αὐτός τε πρᾳότητα[37] καὶ φιλανθρωπίαν πολλὴν ἐνδεικνύμενος οὕτω τοὺς Λίβυας προσεποιήσατο ὥστε τοῦ λοιποῦ καθάπερ ἐν χώρᾳ οἰκείᾳ τὴν πορείαν ποιεῖσθαι, οὔτε ὑποχωρούντων τῶν ταύτῃ ᾠκημένων οὔτε τι ἀποκρύπτεσθαι βουλομένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγορὰν παρεχομένων καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τοῖς στρατιώταις ᾗ βούλοιντο ὑπηρετούντων.

> ...making a display of great affability and benevolence, he so won the Libyans over that from that point onward he made his way as if in

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the Vandals to abandon the usurper, Justinian upheld the treaty of Zeno and Geiseric (supra, n. 19) and intimated that it was the Vandals themselves who were in thrall (3.16.14): "Rally together with us, therefore, and join in the work of liberating yourselves from so base a tyranny, so that you may be able to recover both peace and freedom (συλλάβεσθε τοίνυν ἡμῖν καὶ συνελευθεροῦτε ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς οὕτω μοχθηρᾶς τυραννίδος, ὅπως ἂν δύνησθε τῆς τε εἰρήνης καὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἀπόνασθαι)." The subtext is unsubtle: any Vandal resistance to Belisarius' campaign of liberation could be construed as collaboration with the foe, and consequently as an abdication of the treaty with Geiseric. Opposition to the emperor was thus opportunistically reinscribed as opposition to the imperative of liberation.

συνελευθεροῦτε here, the only appearance of the verb in Procopius, correlates aptly with the warning issued to the citizens of Plataia by the Spartan king Arkhidamos, αὐτοί τε αὐτονομεῖσθε καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ξυνελευθεροῦτε (Thuc. 2.72.1, the sole appearance of the verb in the imperative; see also 3.13.1, 62.5, 6.56.3), linking the Plataian claim to self-determination with a concomitant obligation to participate ungrudgingly in the work of liberation, and suggesting that Plataia's alignment with a tyrannical Athens amounts to a renunciation of independence; like Justinian, Arkhidamos points to ἐλευθέρωσις as an ethical and political imperative that entitles the liberator to construe indifference or resistance as hostility.

[37]See n. 39 infra.

> his own land; for neither did the inhabitants of the area withdraw nor did they wish to conceal anything, but they furnished a market and complied with the soldiers in whatever way they desired.

The invading general's conduct, and the cooperation he received in response, form the basis of the comparison between Belisarius and Brasidas which is preserved in the scholion on the text of Thucydides cited above (p. 151). Brasidas, at the head of a small force operating in Thrace from 424 B.C.E., succeeded in detaching a number of cities from the Athenian alliance, the most notable of which was Amphipolis.[38] Reflecting back upon that period—in which he himself, of course, played a conspicuous role—Thucydides wrote the following (Thuc. 4.108.1–3):

> καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους ἐφοβοῦντο μὴ ἀποστῶσιν. ὁ γὰρ Βρασίδας ἔν τε τοῖς ἄλλοις μέτριον ἑαυτὸν παρεῖχε, καὶ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις πανταχοῦ ἐδήλου ὡς ἐλευθερώσων τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐκπεμφθείη. καὶ αἱ πόλεις πυνθανόμεναι αἱ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὑπήκοοι τῆς τε Ἀμφιπόλεως τὴν ἅλωσιν καὶ ἃ παρέχεται, τήν τε ἐκείνου πραότητα,[39] μάλιστα δὴ ἐπήρθησαν ἐς τὸ νεωτερίζειν, καὶ ἐπεκηρυκεύοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν κρύφα, ἐπιπαριέναι τε κελεύοντες καὶ βουλόμενοι αὐτοὶ ἕκαστοι πρῶτοι ἀποστῆναι.
>
> [The Athenians] also feared that their allies would revolt. For Brasidas showed great moderation in his dealings with them, and was constantly declaring in his speeches that he had been sent to accomplish the liberation of Hellas. The cities subject to the Athenians, when they learned of the capture of Amphipolis and the settlement which had been offered them, and of the affability of Brasidas himself, became primed for revolution and appealed to him discreetly, entreating him to approach and contending among themselves to be the first to revolt.

Thucydides portrays Brasidas as a most un-Spartan Spartan, an almost Periclean combination of energetic initiative, eloquence and shrewdness.[40]

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[38]On Brasidas' objectives in Thrace, see Knight, esp. 154–57.

[39]Hornblower (1996: 342–43 *ad loc.*, see also pp. 43–49) observes that this word, πραότητα, which describes the mildness of both Belisarius and Brasidas, occurs only here in Thucydides. "The vocabulary he uses about, or puts into the mouth of, Brasidas, seems to be distinctive" (342).

[40]He is described as ἄνδρα ἔν τε τῇ Σπάρτῃ δοκοῦντα δραστήριον εἶναι ἐς τὰ πάντα (Thuc. 4.81.1), recalling the quality Pericles ascribes to the Athenians best suited

Brasidas' success in prying the cities of Thrace away from the grip of Athens lay precisely in his capacity to present himself as δίκαιος καὶ μέτριος, a just and even-handed fellow.[41] Justice and moderation, as we have seen, were also the watchwords of Belisarius.

In fact, the tactical objectives of the two generals, each at the head of a small expeditionary force far from the main armies, were strikingly similar. Though the Vandals brought the African war to a precipitous close by choosing to face the imperial forces in two pitched battles,[42] and Brasidas' death at Amphipolis removed the last impediment to the Peace of Nicias in 421 B.C.E., both generals understood that the struggle was ultimately for the hearts and minds of that *tertium quid* among the parties in the conflict, the inhabitants of the localities from which the contending war machines derived their sustenance, who through a timely change of allegiance might have thrown the decision to one side or the other. For both Brasidas and Belisarius the key to winning this allegiance lay in substantiating their promises of liberation by restoring a former dispensation. In either case, an appeal to a past unity of interest and identity became the basis of a demand for collaboration and support.

Belisarius appealed to the legacy of Roman rule over Libya and to the lingering self-identification among the Libyans themselves as Romans—whose duty it was, therefore, to recognize the authority of the emperor in Constantinople and to participate in the reassertion of imperial rule. Brasidas, for his part, could appeal to the legacy of panhellenic cooperation in the Persian Wars. By way of defending the Greek achievement against a resurgence of despotism on the part of Athens, he put forward his own leadership and that of Sparta at the head of a crusade in vindication of a shared investment in ἐλευθερία. In Brasidas' hands the topos of liberation, derisively invoked by their allies to rouse the Spartans to the defense of their entrenched geopolitical interests,[43] acquired genuine transformative power. As Thucydides notes, he

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to lead an empire (2.63.3; cf. 2.64.4). Thucydides also testifies to his un-Laconic eloquence: ἦν δὲ οὐδὲ ἀδύνατος, ὡς Λακεδαιμόνιος, εἰπεῖν (4.84.2).

[41]ἑαυτὸν παρασχὼν δίκαιον καὶ μέτριον ἐς τὰς πόλεις, Thuc. 4.81.2 (supra, n. 6); cf. 4.105.2. The moderation of Brasidas is a recurring theme; see Babut 431–33. Hornblower (1996: 56) emphasizes how Thucydides indicates that this was his own judgment about Brasidas. On the thematic balance between the two sections (4.81/108), see n. 48 infra.

[42]Supra, n. 30.

[43]See esp. Thuc. 1.18.1–2, 69.1 (skillfully alluded to by Procopius at *Wars* 2.3.34), 84.1, 2.8.4, attesting to Sparta's traditional hostility to tyranny and the prestige the city derived from it at the commencement of the Peloponnesian War; the importance of

was to make it his constant theme.[44] Collaboration with Athens was to be resisted not simply for one's own sake, but so as to withhold from the Athenians the means of advancing their plans for domination.[45] Because neutrality abetted Athens, Brasidas could not suffer anyone to remain non-aligned.

Like Belisarius, Brasidas commanded a small and rather motley force.[46] He too faced the challenge of welding an unruly coalition into an effective army united by a community of interests and objectives. The initial response he received among the cities of Thrace had, moreover, been a wary one. His attempt to explain his position to the citizens of the first city he encountered, Akanthos—who responded to his arrival by closing their gates to him—combined the promise of liberation with the barely concealed threat of force. His sense of mission persuaded him that his objectives justified methods that were scarcely distinguishable from those of the imperialist, as he acknowledges (Thuc. 4.87.4–5):

> οὐ γὰρ δὴ εἰκότως γ' ἂν τάδε πράσσοιμεν, οὐδὲ ὀφείλομεν οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι μὴ κοινοῦ τινὸς ἀγαθοῦ αἰτίᾳ τοὺς μὴ βουλομένους ἐλευθεροῦν· οὐδ' αὖ ἀρχῆς ἐφιέμεθα, παῦσαι δὲ μᾶλλον ἑτέρους σπεύδοντες τοὺς πλείους ἂν ἀδικοῖμεν, εἰ ξύμπασιν αὐτονομίαν ἐπιφέροντες ὑμᾶς τοὺς ἐναντιουμένους περιίδοιμεν.

Thucydides' own testimony *in propria persona* to this fact is rightly emphasized by Hornblower (1991: 113 *ad* 1.69.1; see also *idem* 1987: 181). Other ancient references are cited by Tuplin 353 n. 20; see also Bernhardt, who explores how Sparta exploited its reputation to justify its power. Raaflaub 248–57. traces Sparta's gradual abandonment of its liberation propaganda in the course of the Peloponnesian War. On the appreciable value of public perception and the concern of *poleis* to manage such perceptions, see Crane 18–19: "the surfaces of things, whether they are deceptive or not, have real impact" (19).

[44]Most fully articulated in his speech before Akanthos (to be discussed presently), but recapitulated at Torone (Thuc. 4.114.3) and later at Skione (4.120.3).

[45]See esp. Thuc. 5.9.9: Brasidas' men at Amphipolis are to prove themselves worthy allies of Sparta; the alternative, apart from death or outright servitude, is to become subjects of Athens "and impediments to the liberation of the rest of the Hellenes," τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς Ἕλλησι κωλυταῖς γενέσθαι ἐλευθερώσεως.

[46]Brasidas' force was built around an initial core of 1,700 hoplites, of which 700 were freed Helots and the remainder Peloponnesian mercenaries, supplemented by contingents of allies from the cities he brought over to his side (Thuc. 4.78.1, 80.5). See Connor 128 n. 46. For Brasidas' forces at Amphipolis, see Thuc. 5.6.4–5. At Amphipolis Brasidas was skeptical about the quality of his men against Athenian hoplites (5.8.2–3). On the episode, see Boegehold, esp. 150.

> "We Spartans would not be acting rightly, nor would we be obliged to liberate people against their will, were we not motivated for the sake of the common good. We do not long for empire; in fact we are keen to put a stop to it; and we should be slighting the majority if while offering independence to everyone we should overlook your opposition."

Like the citizens of Sullectum, the Akanthians ultimately received Brasidas and his army, sparing themselves the experience of being liberated against their will.[47] As with Belisarius at Sullectum, one nonetheless notes in the claims of Brasidas an uneasy tension between principle and expediency, and wonders to what lengths either general might have gone had his demands been met with less compliance. Thucydides himself is far from unequivocal about the value of Brasidas' promises. He points out that much of what the cities of Thrace discovered in Brasidas proved to be illusory. The Thracians were so captivated by the Spartan's style and dash that they underestimated the power of Athens and their own chances.[48]

Nor did Brasidas' fierce resistance to the Athenians find real resonance with the Spartans at large, who at that particular point in the war sought not so much the liberation of Greece as merely an armistice and time to recover their equilibrium.[49] Brasidas' brilliance and success had made him an object of suspicion and jealousy at home.[50] Despite his success in liquidating the Vandal

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[47]For the expression, see Raaflaub 252.

[48]Thuc. 4.108.3–6. At Skione Brasidas was voted a gold crown as the liberator of Greece and feted in the manner of a victorious athlete (Thuc. 4.121.1). On the relation between Thuc. 4.108 and Thucydides' earlier (and, as some have thought, less ambivalent) assessment of Brasidas (4.81), see Connor 133–35: "having heard Brasidas at Akanthos and seen him in action, the reader is now prepared for a more explicit and more critical analysis of Brasidas' claims" (134). Thucydides did not regard him as being above outright misrepresentation (4.108.5, cf. 4.85.7). On Brasidas' inaccuracies in these passages, see Gomme 3: 553–54, 583; also Hunter 119–75, esp. 162.

[49]Sparta's ambivalence foregrounds Thucydides' account of Brasidas' expedition (4.80.1, 81.1). On Brasidas' relationship with the Spartan government, see Hornblower (1996: 268–69, also 50–61) who argues that Brasidas' claim that Sparta will respect the autonomy of the places he wins over (Thuc. 4.86.1, cf. 88.1) implies that his policy objectives had received detailed confirmation at home. Above all, the recovery of the Spartiates captured on the island of Sphakteria was of critical concern (4.108.7 [for which see the following note]; 5.15.1, 18.7).

[50]Thuc. 4.108.7: "the Spartans did nothing to support him, partly because their leading men were jealous of him (φθόνῳ ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν), partly because what

regime, Belisarius likewise remained an ambivalent figure, exposed like Brasidas beyond the home front and removed from the welter of home politics, effectively pursuing an independent foreign policy which at some point had to be reintegrated into the larger picture. Like Brasidas, Belisarius' conspicuous success had made him an object of suspicion at home. The general was denounced to the emperor as plotting to establish for himself a kingdom in Libya.[51]

The larger aftermath of the Vandal War, moreover, hinted at some of the complexities which remained to be resolved in the new order inaugurated by Justinian in the West. The durability of the settlement Belisarius achieved in Libya with his calls for liberation and his Brasidean melding of justice and moderation was placed in jeopardy by the imperial administrators who came after him and by Justinian's insensitivity to the diverse interests to be found there. Thucydides remarks of Brasidas that he won such an excellent reputation, as a Spartan, that he left behind him the conviction that all the others were just like him (Thuc. 4.81.3)—a hope soon disappointed. Possibly the Libyans were better informed about what lay in store for them, but to little avail.[52]

Procopius emphasizes the fragility of the situation. Even in the flush of victory scarcely three months after the expedition departed from Constantinople, following his initial rout of the Vandal army at Ad Decimum, the tenth milepost out from Carthage, Belisarius had not abandoned his doubts about either the discipline of his army or the loyalty of the Carthaginians, whose sympathies for the Vandals had yet to be gauged. Having marched to the city unopposed, with

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they really wanted was to recover the prisoners captured on the island and to end the war."

[51]Charges which were undoubtedly buoyed by reports that Belisarius had seated himself on Gelimer's throne in Carthage and dined at his table (*Wars* 3.20.21, 21.1–6). Such an offer would actually be tendered by the Goths in Italy (6.29.18–20, 26–28, 30.25–26); on the negotiations, see Wolfram 349–50 and n. 670.

[52]Oppressive measures enforced by imperial treasury officials and persecution of members of the Arian faith, comprising a good proportion of the imperial forces in North Africa, are cited as contributory factors to the violent mutiny that erupted in Carthage while Belisarius was engaged on the Vandal campaign: *Wars* 4.8.25, 14.8–15; on Arianism in Africa see Kaegi 1965. Procopius comments on the scale of the destruction caused by Justinian's western campaigns in both the *Wars* and the *Anecdota*. See in particular *Wars* 4.28.52, the concluding sentence of his history of the Vandal War: "and so it came to pass that those of the Libyans who survived, few as they were in number and exceedingly poor, at last found some peace"; cf. 8.17.22; *HA* 6.25, 18.3–12. His judgment appears to have been excessively harsh: see Pringle 1: 114; Cameron 1989: 176–78; Modéran.

the citizens throwing open the gates to him, he prudently passed the night encamped outside the walls, refusing to venture anything against the hazards of darkness.[53] The next day, after his accompanying fleet had landed, the imperial forces entered the city in strict formation. Belisarius' instructions to his troops recapitulated the lessons to be drawn from their successes to date (*Wars* 3.20.18–20):

> ἔνθα δὴ πολλὰ μὲν τοὺς στρατιώτας ὑπέμνησεν, ἡλίκα σφίσιν εὐτυχήματα γένοιτο, ἐπειδὴ σωφροσύνην ἐς Λίβυας ἐπεδείξαντο, πολλὰ δὲ παρῄνεσε τὴν εὐκοσμίαν ἐν Καρχηδόνι ὡς μάλιστα διασώσασθαι. Λίβυας γὰρ ἅπαντας Ῥωμαίους τὸ ἀνέκαθεν ὄντας γενέσθαι τε ὑπὸ Βανδίλοις οὔτι ἐθελουσίους καὶ πολλὰ πεπονθέναι πρὸς ἀνδρῶν βαρβάρων ἀνόσια. διὸ δὴ καὶ βασιλέα ἐς πόλεμον καταστῆναι Βανδίλοις, εἶναί τε οὐχ ὅσιον ξυμβῆναί τι πρὸς αὐτῶν ἄχαρι ἐς ἀνθρώπους, ὧν τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ὑπόθεσιν ποιησάμενοι ἐπὶ Βανδίλους ἐστράτευσαν.
>
> There he reminded the soldiers at length that great good fortune had come to them because they had displayed moderation toward the Libyans, and he exhorted them strongly to preserve particularly good order in Carthage. For the Libyans were all Romans of old and had become subject to the Vandals unwillingly and suffered many outrages at the hands of these barbarians. Therefore the emperor had entered into war with the Vandals, and it was not holy that anything unpleasant should come from them to the people whose freedom they had made the ground for taking the field against the Vandals.

Here for the first time in Procopius' narrative do the various threads which constituted Justinian's official version of the Vandal War cohere. Yet the account is not merely an echo of imperial propaganda. By depicting the elements of opportunism and expediency that caused Justinian to intervene in North Africa, the historian offers a valuable corrective to a reductivist or triumphalist view of the interests at stake there, and injects a healthy note of realism into his analysis of international relations. To the extent that an extended comparison between Belisarius and Brasidas is implicit in the text—a conclusion that would be compelling even apart from the corroborating evidence supplied by the scholia on Thucydides—Procopius' allusion to the classical figure contextualizes and complicates his portrait of Belisarius, underscoring both the

[53] *Wars* 3.20.2. One of the captains of the Roman fleet, a certain Kalonymos, disobeyed strict orders to avoid the harbor of Carthage and set about despoiling the property of the merchants on the waterfront (3.20.16).

generosity that made him a focus of attraction and the ruthlessness of which he was capable.

Had such a mix of principle and pragmatism been more widely practiced, Procopius seems to conclude, the reconquest of North Africa might not have proved the hollow triumph he ultimately judges it to have been. The historian credits Belisarius with having achieved a glory never before attained by the men of his time "nor even by anyone of the ancients" (*Wars* 3.21.8), not on account of his generalship, but in light of the tranquil entry of his troops into Carthage, who refrained from the customary excesses practiced by victorious soldiers. No insult was offered, no interruption in the flow of daily life and commerce; "rather, in a captured city, one which had experienced a change of government and a shift of allegiance (ἐν ἁλούσῃ πόλει καὶ πολιτείαν μεταβαλούσῃ καὶ βασιλείαν ἀλλαξαμένῃ), it came about that no one's household was excluded from the privileges of the marketplace" (3.21.10). Such a seamless transition of power, had it endured, might have realized for the liberated inhabitants of North Africa all the benefits of which their sovereign had boasted in his legislation.

Belisarius in the Field, Part II: Naples Besieged

Despite the prominence Procopius assigns to Libyan collaboration in supporting the imperial victory over the Vandals, we see the Libyans only in the mass and only at a distant remove. On one level this is a vindication both of Belisarius' strategy, which was to insulate the natives as much as possible from the depredations of war, and of the Libyans' own canniness in sensing the turning of the tide in favor of the imperial forces. But there is consequently little to suggest how the Libyans themselves might have viewed the issues at stake in the conflict. With the Gothic War it is otherwise: in a conflict characterized by stalemate, by violent swings of momentum, and by extended sieges of fortified cities, the native population had a more conspicuous part to play and their loyalties assumed a far greater prominence. In particular, Procopius' account of Belisarius' reluctant siege of Naples furnishes the historian with an opportunity to revisit the themes of political allegiance and cultural identity he treated in his account of the Vandal War. Here too Belisarius' Brasidean duplicitousness and ambivalence takes on a sharper edge, as the distinctions between the imperatives of liberation and conquest become increasingly difficult to maintain.

The initial, ascendant phase of the Italian campaign, marked by Belisarius' capture and successful defense of Rome[54] and the eventual surrender of the Gothic capital at Ravenna to the imperial forces in May of 540, was waged with

[54]On the Thucydidean coloring of this episode, see Adshead 1990.

the self-assurance and clarity of purpose vindicated by the African war.[55] But the situation in Italy was complicated by the greater degree of cooperation and concord that distinguished Ostrogothic relations with their subjects from those of the Vandals, and also by the presence of the senate and the papacy at Rome as institutional and ideological counterweights to the imperial seat at Constantinople. Procopius himself expressed admiration for the Gothic achievement in Italy. He eulogizes Theoderic the Great as "in name a tyrant (τύραννος), but in fact an emperor (βασιλεύς) no less truly than any of those who have distinguished themselves in that office from the beginning" (Wars 5.1.29).[56] In a way that has no parallel in the Vandal War, his account of the Gothic War is suffused with a consciousness of the road not taken, a sense of loss stemming from the unexplored possibility of a lasting basis of accommodation between the Italians, the Romans of the eastern empire, and the Goths. Under the polarizing conditions of great-power conflict, in contrast, Italian loyalties would prove to be surprisingly supple and calculating.

After the diplomatic pretexts for aggression had been set in place,[57] Justinian instructed Belisarius to invade Italy and to treat the Goths as the enemy, ὡς πολεμίοις (Wars 5.7.26). Belisarius crossed the strait of Messina and landed in Italy without incident.[58] The first city he encountered whose

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[55]Thus the author of the first portion (§§1–5 in Duchesne's edition) of the biography of pope Silverius (536–537 C.E.) in the *Liber Pontificalis*, writing in the 540s, can relate how Justinian *misit Vilisarium* [sic] *patricium cum exercitum ut liberaret omnem Italiam a captivitatem Gothorum* (Silverius §2, Duchesne 1: 290). On the date of this material, see Hildebrand 216–17; Duchesne 1: xxxix–xli. For *LP*'s account of the siege of Naples, see n. 77 infra.

[56]On Ostrogothic political ideology, see Amory 50–59, esp. 55–57 on the invocation of *libertas* in Cassiodorus' *Variae*; also Moorhead 1987. On the Gothic settlement in Italy, see the summary of scholarship given by Amory 47 n. 12. Bornmann 140–47 discusses Procopius' judgment of Theoderic and adduces several Thucydidean parallels in his text, notably from Thucydides' obituary of Pericles. Procopius, however, relies on many of these same elements in his "eulogy" of Belisarius following his return to Constantinople in 540 (*Wars* 7.1.1–24); supra, n. 7.

[57]See the summary of the history of the conflict supplied by Amory 6–12. The situation in Italy was stabilized only in 554, when Justinian issued the Pragmatic Sanction establishing the form of governance for the province (*Nov.* Appendix 7, Schöll-Kroll 799–802). See Jones 1964: 291–92. The offices of the western court, which the Goths had preserved, were abolished; thus any doubt that there was to be but one center of empire was removed. On the consequences for the western aristocracy see Brown, esp. 1–60; Barnish; also Stein 617–18.

[58]On forces deployed for the Gothic War, see Hannestad; also Liebeschuetz 1996.

position was defensible and which contained a considerable Gothic garrison was Naples. Encamping before the walls, the general received a delegation from the city, headed by a certain Stephanos, a trained orator and, it would emerge, quite as capable as Belisarius in manipulating the politics of Roman identity to his own advantage.[59] The speech he delivered to Belisarius urging him to pass by the city seized the rhetorical initiative by appropriating the very terms with which Belisarius had justified the Vandal campaign. In Libya the general had underscored both the principled and the practical advantages of observing justice and encouraging the Libyans to embrace the imperial forces as fellow Romans, and thus to expose themselves to the risk of Vandal reprisals. The Neapolitans, in contrast, appeal to a shared Roman identity in a plea to be spared the consequences of shifting their allegiance (Wars 5.8.7):

> οὐ δίκαια ποιεῖς, ὦ στρατηγὲ, ἐπ' ἄνδρας Ῥωμαίους τε καὶ οὐδὲν ἀδικοῦντας στρατεύων, οἳ πόλιν τε μικρὰν οἰκοῦμεν καὶ βαρβάρων δεσποτῶν φρουρὰν ἔχομεν, ὥστε οὐδ' ἀντιπρᾶξαι, ἢν ἐθέλωμεν, ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι.
>
> "You do not practice justice, general, in taking the field against men who are Romans and have done no wrong, who inhabit a small city and have a garrison of barbarians as masters, so that it is not for us to act in opposition, even if we should wish to do so."

Procopius had focused upon the difficulty, in the Vandal War, of shaping the Roman expeditionary forces into a body united by a commonality of interests and outlook, capable of recognizing the Libyan inhabitants, and being recognized in turn, as allies and fellow-countrymen rather than as aliens. The Neapolitan attempt to trade upon an acknowledged Roman identity in a bid to be spared the consequences of shifting their allegiance—less out of enthusiasm for Gothic rule, perhaps, than in pursuing the course of least resistance, in view of the garrison within their walls[60]—deftly turned the tables back on Belisarius. The general was free to construe the Neapolitans' unwillingness to undertake

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[59]Bornmann 147–50 compares this exchange with that between Arkhidamos and the Plataians in Thucydides. In particular, cf. Thuc. 2.71.1–2 and *Wars* 5.8.7 (cited in the main text); also Thuc. 2.72.2 and *Wars* 5.8.8–9. See also supra, n. 36.

[60]In contrast, the cities of Bruttium and Lucania, which were unwalled and undefended, went over to Belisarius readily (*Wars* 5.8.2): κατὰ ἔχθος τὸ Γότθων μάλιστα τῇ παρούσῃ ἀρχῇ, ὡς τὸ εἰκὸς, ἤχθοντο ("they were, owing to their hostility for the Goths, understandably ill-disposed toward the present regime"). In a subsequent siege the Gothic king Totila would hail the Neapolitans for having manifested the greatest loyalty (εὔνοια) to the Goths among all the Italians (7.7.12).

sacrifice on behalf of the emperor's cause as a dereliction of their duty to join in the work of their own liberation, and to treat them accordingly.

Upon his arrival in Thrace, Brasidas had anticipated very similar objections from the citizens of Akanthos, the first city that resisted his march. They would, he supposed, proclaim their sympathy with the aims of his mission but protest that their own impotence absolved them from an obligation to render assistance. It is unjust, they would claim, to impose a dangerous liberty upon those unprepared to receive it. In that event, he stated darkly, he would be obliged to resort to force and ravage their lands (Thuc. 4.87.2):

> εἰ δ' ἐμοῦ ταῦτα προϊσχομένου ἀδύνατοι μὲν φήσετε εἶναι, εὖνοι δ' ὄντες ἀξιώσετε μὴ κακούμενοι διωθεῖσθαι καὶ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν μὴ ἀκίνδυνον ὑμῖν φαίνεσθαι, δίκαιόν τε εἶναι, οἷς καὶ δυνατὸν δέχεσθαι αὐτήν, τούτοις καὶ ἐπιφέρειν, ἄκοντα δὲ μηδένα προσαναγκάζειν, μάρτυρας μὲν θεοὺς καὶ ἥρως τοὺς ἐγχωρίους ποιήσομαι ὡς ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ ἥκων οὐ πείθω....
>
> "If, once I have set out my position, you are going to say to me that you are powerless but insofar as you are well-disposed toward me you do not consider that you should be made to suffer for rejecting me, and that liberty does not appear to you to be free from danger, that it is just to offer it only to those who have the capacity to receive it and not to compel anyone who does not will it, then I shall call the gods and heroes of this country as witnesses that I have come here for your benefit and could not persuade you of it...."

Brasidas threatened the destruction of a small city for its refusal to grasp the freedom he was offering it; yet his larger message of resistance to Athens and struggle for the common good (supra, pp. 167–68) also resonated. As has been noticed already, in the end the Akanthians resolved to go over to Brasidas, some persuaded by his oratory, as Thucydides states, and some out of concern for the just-ripened crops lying outside the walls.[61] This intersection of pragmatism and enthusiasm produced a bloodless result congruent with Brasidas' larger objectives. Yet the fact remains that the perilous gift of freedom Brasidas offered to Akanthos and the other cities of Thrace was indeed more of a burden than a privilege for those lacking the means to defend it. The Akanthians had undoubtedly shown good sense in not obliging the Spartan to liberate them

[61]Thuc. 4.88.1. Before Akanthos was opened to him, Brasidas himself was required to vouch personally for the pledges sworn by Sparta that the allies would be preserved as αὐτόνομοι. A small faction within the city had joined with the city of Khalkidike in inviting him into Thrace (Thuc. 4.84).

against their will, but Brasidas' cavalier treatment of the dilemma faced by any dependency enmeshed in great-power conflict demonstrated his indifference to their plight.

The experiences of two such cities in the Peloponnesian War, Mende and Skione, pointed to the unsavory outcomes awaiting minor powers whose reach exceeded their grasp.[62] Upon Brasidas' refusal to hand over the cities under the terms of an armistice,[63] the Athenians vowed to counterattack forthwith and voted, on the motion of Kleon, to destroy Skione and put its inhabitants to death.[64] Despite his consciousness of the impending Athenian reprisal, Brasidas was able to leave only a light covering force as protection, while he with the bulk of his forces joined an expedition with his ally Perdikkas of Macedon.[65] During his absence, the Athenians recaptured Mende by storm; the city was sacked, and a massacre of its inhabitants only narrowly averted.[66] Skione was invested and held out through the conclusion of the Peace of Nicias, the terms of which gave the Athenians a free hand to deal with the city as they wished. Upon the fall of Skione the men were put to death, and the women and children enslaved.[67]

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[62]On their fates (Thuc. 4.120–24, 129–33; 5.2.2, 18.7–8, 32.1), see the detailed discussion in Connor 134–40. As he points out (136 and n. 71), the ultimate destruction of Skione was one of the most notorious events in the war.

[63]Thucydides reports that at Skione Brasidas congratulated the inhabitants, since "they had come forward to claim their freedom, and had not disgracefully awaited some pressure to be brought to bear upon them regarding a matter so obviously concerning their own good" (Thuc. 4.120.3). As Hornblower (1996: 379 *ad loc.*) points out, "this is not very polite about Akanthos" and the other cities which had capitulated to Brasidas. Mende was encouraged in its revolt by the example of Skione (4.123.2).

[64]Thuc. 4.122.6. On the decision, see Bosworth 1993: 37 n. 37.

[65]Thuc. 4.123.4f. Bosworth 1993: 37 n. 39 and Gomme 3: 612 *ad* 4.124.1 draw attention to Brasidas' poor judgment.

[66]Thuc. 4.130.6: καὶ μόλις οἱ στρατηγοὶ κατέσχον ὥστε μὴ καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διαφθείρεσθαι. The city had become divided by factional strife, one party favoring Athens and the other Brasidas; see Connor 137 n. 76. The Athenians accordingly returned their partisans, presumably democrats (Hornblower 1996: 406 *ad* 4.130.7), to power. Factional divisions similarly played a part in the conduct of the Neapolitans toward Belisarius. On the problems of reconstructing the political complexion of such divisions, see Moorhead 1983: 576 and n. 5; cf. Amory 145 n. 194, 165–94. See also Thompson 98–100; Liebeschuetz 1996: 233.

[67]Thuc. 5.32.1.

Like Brasidas before Akanthos, Belisarius replied to the protestations of powerlessness he received from Naples with a call to freedom and the barely concealed threat of force (*Wars* 5.8.13):

> δέξασθε τοίνυν τῇ πόλει τὸν βασιλέως στρατὸν ἐπὶ τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ὑμῶν τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Ἰταλιωτῶν ἥκοντα,[68] καὶ μὴ τὰ πάντων ἀνιαρότατα ἐφ' ὑμῖν ἕλησθε.
>
> "Receive therefore into your city the army of the emperor, which has come for the sake of your freedom and that of the other Italians, and do not choose to bring the most grievous of all outcomes upon yourselves."

Inasmuch as either capitulation or resistance would involve the Neapolitans in conflict and expose the city to risk, the decision was theirs: should they side with the invader and affirm freedom, or keep faith with the Goths and confirm their servitude? Thus Belisarius put the matter to Stephanos (*Wars* 5.8.14–15):

> ὅσοι μὲν γὰρ δουλείαν ἢ ἄλλο τι ἀναδυόμενοι τῶν αἰσχρῶν ἐς πόλεμον χωροῦσιν, οὗτοι δὴ ἔν γε τῷ ἀγῶνι εὐημεροῦντες εὐτυχήματα διπλᾶ ἔχουσι, ξὺν τῇ νίκῃ καὶ τὴν τῶν κακῶν ἐλευθερίαν κτησάμενοι, καὶ ἡσσώμενοι φέρονταί τι αὑτοῖς παραμύθιον, τὸ μὴ ἑκόντες τῇ χείρονι ἕπεσθαι τύχῃ. οἷς δὲ παρὸν ἀμαχητὶ ἐλευθέροις εἶναι, οἱ δὲ ὅπως τὴν δουλείαν βέβαιον ἕξουσιν ἐς ἀγῶνα καθιστῶνται,[69] οὗτοι δὴ καὶ νενικηκότες, ἂν οὕτω τύχοι, ἐν τοῖς ἀναγκαιοτάτοις ἐσφάλησαν, καὶ κατὰ τὴν μάχην ἐλασσόνως ἢ ἐβούλοντο ἀπαλλάξαντες ξὺν τῇ ἄλλῃ κακοδαιμονίᾳ καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἥσσης ξυμφορὰν ἕξουσι.
>
> "Those who go to war attempting to divest themselves from slavery or any other disgraceful thing enjoy a twofold good fortune if they prosper in the struggle, because together with their victory they have won freedom from their affliction; even if defeated they draw some consolation for themselves, insofar as they submit to an adverse fate

[68]An echo of the pronouncement Belisarius instructed his lieutenant to deliver at Sullectum (*Wars* 3.16.9, cited supra, p. 163); cf. Brasidas, at Akanthos: οὐκ ἐπὶ κακῷ, ἐπ' ἐλευθερώσει δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων παρελήλυθα (Thuc. 4.86.1); and the Plataian reproach to the Spartans: ἐπὶ δουλείᾳ τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ἥκετε (2.71.3).

[69]A comparable image of the perversity of toiling to secure one's own enslavement is evoked by the Corinthians at the second allied congress at Sparta (Thuc. 1.121.5): "how appalling to imagine that, while their allies never stop bringing in contributions to maintain their own slavery (ἐπὶ δουλείᾳ τῇ αὑτῶν φέροντες οὐκ ἀπεροῦσιν), we, whose aims are vengeance and survival, should hesitate to incur expense...."

> against their will. But those who have the opportunity to be free without fighting, yet enter into a struggle in order to establish their slavery on a still firmer foundation, fail in the most crucial respect even if they prevail; and if they fare in the battle less happily than they wished, together with their other ills they will experience the consequences of defeat."

By casting capitulation to the emperor as a bid for freedom that might even be won without a trial of arms, and cooperation with the Goths as an embrace of slavery,[70] Belisarius merely signaled his indifference, like that of Brasidas at the predicament of Mende and Skione, to the plight of the Neapolitans, who had to contend with either the possibility of reprisal by the Goths if they went over to the general or the danger of making him their enemy. In the absence of a positive affirmation from the Italians his calls for liberation fell flat. Should the Gothic garrison remain in the city and attempt with the support of the populace to oppose his entry, Belisarius was adamant that no quarter would be granted. Like Brasidas before Akanthos,[71] he would leave the decision in the lap of divinity (*Wars* 5.8.17):

> ὡς, ἢν τούτων ἁπάντων αὐτοί τε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀμελήσαντες ὅπλα ἡμῖν ἀνταίρειν τολμήσητε, ἀνάγκη καὶ ἡμᾶς, ἢν θεὸς θέλῃ, τῷ προστυχόντι ὡς πολεμίῳ χρῆσθαι.

> "Know that if both you [Goths] and they [the Neapolitans], disregarding all these considerations, dare to raise arms against us, we shall find it necessary, if God so wills, to treat whomever we encounter as an enemy."

By affirming Belisarius' willingness to regard noncompliance as hostility and to treat both Goths and Italians indiscriminately as the enemy, Procopius verges upon a potentially stunning transformation of Belisarius' position with respect to his Thucydidean counterpart. The moment invites the reader to

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[70]At the end of his speech, Belisarius makes certain guarantees "if the Neapolitans should resolve to choose the cause of the emperor and thus to be rid of so cruel a slavery," τά τε βασιλέως ἑλέσθαι καὶ δουλείας οὕτω χαλεπῆς ἀπηλλάχθαι (*Wars* 5.8.18); cf. Brasidas (Thuc. 4.87.3) δουλείας ἀπαλλαγῆναι.

[71]Like Brasidas as well (Thuc. 4.86.1), Belisarius gives personal pledges on behalf of the oaths sworn for the objectives of the expedition; pressed for further assurances, he points (*Wars* 5.8.27) to the experience of the Sicilians, "to whose lot it had lately fallen to exchange barbarian tyrants for the legitimate rule (βασιλείαν) of Justinian and to be free men undisturbed by any difficulty (ἐλευθέροις τε εἶναι καὶ ἀπαθέσι δυσκόλων ἁπάντων)."

reconsider all that has transpired and to ponder the consequences of noncompliance for both the Neapolitans and Belisarius himself. To play the role of the beguiling liberator is to wager that one's promises, and especially one's threats, will never be put to the test. In the end Brasidas' objectives were merely negative, and destructive: in order to succeed he needed merely to deny the Athenians the resources they drew from their empire in Thrace.[72] Simply by obliging Athens to go to the trouble and the expense of reasserting its authority over its subjects, which frequently entailed their destruction and the loss of their tribute, he advanced his purposes. Belisarius was instead the champion of an imperial order, employing tactics that were not less coercive or potentially as brutal as those to which Brasidas was also prepared to resort, but were directed toward a different objective.

The imperialist means to shear the sheep, not to slaughter them, and attempts to calibrate his violence in a manner that will compel obedience while minimizing loss. As the representative of an imperial power reasserting its dominion over former dependencies, Belisarius was obliged, in view of Naples' failure to return to allegiance, to construe that act as a gesture of rebellion, and, like the Athenians at Mende and Skione, to punish the city accordingly. The problem, as Thucydides captured it for all time in the Mytilene Debate,[73] is how to gauge the instrumental value of an atrocity. Having failed as a Brasidas, might Belisarius succeed as a Kleon?

Within Naples itself, Procopius reports, opinion about Belisarius was divided. The pro-Gothic opposition denounced the imminent surrender of the city as an act of treason and warned that in the (far from certain) event of a Roman victory in Italy such disloyalty would cause Justinian to dominate them and set a garrison over them no less than the Goths had done.[74] Finding no way to escape the consequences of betrayal, a bid to open the city to Belisarius faltered; the general commenced the siege, but to no effect. The stalemate was

[72]A point driven home by Brasidas at Akanthos (Thuc. 4.87.3). See further Kallet-Marx 172.

[73]See esp. Thuc. 3.39.8 (Kleon) and 3.46.3 (Diodotos).

[74]The opposition in Naples was headed by two figures, Pastor and Asklepiodotos, whom Procopius describes as orators (ῥήτορες), and "notables" (λόγιμοι), and who favored the Goths (*Wars* 5.8.22). Their audiences include Goths (29). The Jews in the city, for whom Justinian's theocratic absolutism could hold scant appeal, likewise supported the Goths (41). The pro-Roman faction was headed by the envoy Stephanos, himself λόγιμος (6–7), and a Syrian merchant named Antiokhos (20–21), who was perhaps a representative of the same Eastern commercial interests which strongly encouraged the Libyan campaign (supra, n. 10).

broken only with the discovery of a secret passage into the city by way of an aqueduct.

Belisarius refused, however, to exploit his advantage before making a final appeal to Stephanos to bring about a capitulation. Evoking the dire specter of the *urbs capta*, a city subjected to storm and sack,[75] Belisarius' plea pointed beyond his reluctance at shedding innocent blood to a shared way of life and a common culture threatened with destruction. Victory at such a cost, the end of civil order and of civilization itself, threatened to repudiate the principles validated by Belisarius in his tranquil occupation of Carthage (supra, p. 170). Such a spectacle of undeserved suffering evoked pity,[76] which a shared identity made all the more acute (*Wars* 5.9.27):

> πόλιν δὲ ἀρχαίαν καὶ οἰκήτορας Χριστιανούς τε καὶ Ῥωμαίους ἄνωθεν ἔχουσαν ἐς τοῦτο τύχης οὐκ ἂν εὐξαίμην, ἄλλως τε καὶ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ Ῥωμαίων στρατηγοῦντος, ἐλθεῖν....
>
> "I pray that an ancient city, which has of old been inhabited by Christians and Romans, may not meet with such a fortune, especially at my hands as a commander of Roman troops...."

But the Neapolitans were unpersuaded. "For," Procopius concludes, "it was not fated that the Neapolitans should become subjects of the emperor without chastisement," οὐδὲ γὰρ ⟨χρ⟩ῆν Νεαπολίτας ἀθῴους βασιλεῖ κατηκόους γενέσθαι (*Wars* 5.9.30). He would thereby appear to be washing his hands of them.

Belisarius introduced troops into the city through the aqueduct and soon had it at the mercy of his army. A great slaughter ensued, Procopius reports;[77] but

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75On the topos, see Paul.

76...ἐς οἶκτον ἥκω (*Wars* 5.9.26); compare the Thebans remarking upon the fate of Plataia (Thuc. 3.67.4): οἴκτου τε ἀξιώτεροι τυγχάνειν οἱ ἀπρεπές τι πάσχοντες τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἱ δὲ δικαίως, ὥσπερ οἵδε, τὰ ἐναντία ἐπίχαρτοι εἶναι ("they are more worthy of pity who suffer undeservedly, but those who suffer rightly, as these persons do, are on the contrary a source of satisfaction"). On the subject of pity, see Macleod, esp. 236–37.

77*Wars* 5.10.29. Procopius reports that all of Belisarius' forces took part in the mayhem (θυμῷ γὰρ ἐχόμενοι ἅπαντες, *loc. cit.*), attributing the very worst outrages to the allied contingents. Belisarius' final appeal to Stephanos (5.9.27) had likewise warned of depredations to follow once the barbarians in his army had been unleashed. The contemporary account in the *Liber Pontificalis* (Silverius §3, Duchesne 1: 290) corroborates Procopius' statements about the indiscriminate slaughter that ensued and the violation of the sanctity of the churches. In contrast to Procopius, the ferocity of the as-

Belisarius, like the Athenian commanders at Mende, succeeded in reestablishing order. His efforts to calm his troops characteristically appealed to the need to practice justice and to show themselves worthy of the victory bestowed upon them by the Almighty. The time for hatred and retribution had passed. Further destruction was immoral, and also inexpedient: "by killing these people you will not be ridding yourselves of future enemies, but *punishing yourselves through the death* of your subjects," ἀλλὰ θανάτῳ ζημιωθήσεσθε τῶν ὑπηκόων (*Wars* 5.10.32). Initially hailed as fellow Romans, threatened like the Goths with destruction as enemies, the Neapolitans were reduced by storm and sack to the status of conquered subjects.[78] Having refused to take in hand the work of their own liberation, they had left themselves at the mercy of the invader, who by right of conquest might dispose of them as he wished.

By his intervention, however, Belisarius repudiated the instrumental value of vengeance in the conduct of imperial policy. His speech, as quoted above, cunningly reappropriates the very words with which Kleon, later the author of the resolution which doomed Skione, urged the Athenian assembly in the Mytilene Debate to make an example of a rebellious subject brought to heel. Kleon had urged the Athenians to stand fast in their resolution to destroy Mytilene, "[to show that] those who revolt shall be *punished by death*," ὃς ἂν ἀφιστῆται, θανάτῳ ζημιωσόμενον (Thuc. 3.40.7). Though chastised, the Neapolitans were not destroyed: those who survived were allowed to return to their homes, while Belisarius' troops were somewhat mollified by being allowed to retain their plunder.

Procopius is moved to observe: "thus on that very day it came to pass that the Neapolitans became captives of war and regained their liberty..." αἰχμαλώτοις τε γενέσθαι καὶ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀνασώσασθαι (*Wars* 5.10.35).[79] This paradox expresses perfectly the equivocal nature of Belisarius'

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sault is credited solely to Belisarius himself, *ductus furore* at the refusal of the Neapolitans to open the city to him. Amory 172–173 and nn. 102–3 characterizes Procopius as an apologist attempting to foist the blame for such atrocities upon the barbarians; yet the version of the story in the *LP* (characterized by Amory as "pro-Byzantine") suggests that the assault had been brazenly justified as an unavoidable consequence of Neapolitan intransigence. As Amory acknowledges, Procopius allows his readers to perceive the dilemmas that constrain all sides.

[78]Compare the closing of Belisarius' speech: "let the conquered (νενικημένοι) learn from these events what kind of friends they have forfeited thanks to foolish counsel" (*Wars* 5.10.33).

[79]Perhaps in order to minimize the implied harm done to the Neapolitans by the plundering of the soldiers, he goes on to add: "and they recovered the most precious of

achievement. The general had indeed been obliged to liberate the Neapolitans against their will. Naples proved to be true to the Goths, however reluctantly and ambivalently. Like Belisarius himself, the Neapolitans had employed the politics of Roman identity opportunistically, to supply an ideological cover for what was at root a calculation of relative advantage within the slim space of maneuver afforded to a dependency caught within the clash of great powers. To their credit, perhaps, the Neapolitans had failed to be taken in by Belisarius, as the Thracian cities were by Brasidas and his ultimately illusory vision for a wholly different international order.[80]

By right of conquest, Belisarius had indeed made the Neapolitans his captives, and therefore quite literally his slaves. However, by eschewing the tactics of Kleon and giving the Neapolitans back to their city, the general made himself in turn an emancipator. His achievement was bittersweet at best: ironically overturning the emancipation analogy Justinian had employed in order, as we have seen, to valorize his own role in the recovery of the West—an analogy drawn from Roman law, which formed the basis of the emperor's claim to have restored the rights of Romans subjected to an alien power—Belisarius was first obliged to enslave the Neapolitans before they would accept the gift of freedom Justinian was offering them. The grave losses realized in this flawed outcome presaged the difficulties of attaining a durable settlement in the West.

Conclusion

The thematic interplay of ἐλευθερία and δουλεία in Thucydides' analysis of geopolitics thus furnishes Procopius with a conceptual armature upon which claims made by the emperor himself about his motives and intentions can be held up to view and animated in the pages of Procopius' works. Procopius' techniques, nonetheless, are evocative and impressionistic. He does not seek a rigid template or a pattern of facile correspondences between his work and that of his classical predecessor. Instead, we must suppose that each point of contact between the two texts represents an attempt by Procopius to lend historical depth

their valuables"—the gold and other treasures they had hoarded prior to the assault on the city.

[80]The cynical strategy advocated by the pro-Gothic faction of the city, who viewed the conflict as a struggle for mastery between wholly equivalent overlords (*Wars* 5.8.32–33, 10.44), was narrowly vindicated by the course of events. Tactical considerations had very nearly persuaded Belisarius to abandon the siege, and despite his conquest of the city he proved to be lenient, as his opponents correctly predicted (5.8.37). Soon after the inhabitants of Rome would resolve to open their city to Belisarius, δείσαντες μὴ σφίσι ξυμβαίη ὅσα Νεαπολίταις ξυμπέπτωκε ("fearing lest what had befallen the Neapolitans should fall upon them," 5.14.4).

and imaginative shading to his portrait of contemporary events. The cumulative effect of these gestures, which are very carefully focused, is not merely to cultivate an air of learned antiquarianism, but rather to contextualize events in a manner that shapes expectations and colors the reader's reaction to the unfolding of the narrative.[81]

Procopius' skilled handling of these effects, coupled with his consciousness of the conventions of genre and the striking self-consciousness that his works evince of one another,[82] cautions one against the unreflective assumption that particular characters in his works serve as spokesmen for the historian's own views[83] or that Procopius projected his own sympathies uncritically upon specific individuals or causes his work is designed to vindicate. Though Thucydides furnished a heroic exemplar for Belisarius' achievements in the figure of Brasidas, Thucydides was also keenly aware of Brasidas' flaws and equivocations. Procopius likewise draws out Belisarius' limitations, emphasizing his selflessness and nobility of character while questioning the ends he pursued. Neither account is written in simple admiration of its protagonist; both historians attempt, rather, to lead the reader toward an appreciation of the complexity of the situation each commander confronted.[84]

[81]For comparison, on the involvement of the implied reader in the text of Thucydides, see Connor 12–19, whose own reading is indebted to the reception theory of reader-response criticism elaborated by Wolfgang Iser. Connor's perspective on Thucydides might fittingly be applied to Procopius as well: "ultimately, I believe, the work leads the sympathetic reader—ancient or modern—far beyond the views and values it seems initially to utilize and affirm" (15).

[82]On the cross-references he introduces between his works, see Cameron 1985: 34 n. 7, 50 n. 12.

[83]Contrast, e.g., Bury 2: 424–25.

[84]Compare Connor 236.

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